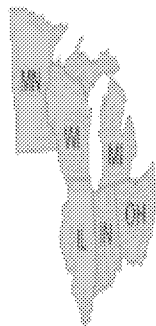


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Great Lakes

Region 5 Intelligence Briefing



November 5, 2021

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Great Lakes

NY Tribe To Plant New Trees To Replace Ash.

WETM-TV Elmira, NY (11/4, Colello) reports the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division and Environment Land Resources Program "is searching for a site within its jurisdiction to plant over 300 new trees." The tribe "removed Ash trees on local properties in 2019" to battle the "Emerald Ash Borer is a beetle native to Asia that was recently introduced to the United States," and now wants to plant trees that may include "highbush cranberry, witch hazel, black elderberry, sugar maple, tamarack, balsam fir, white pine, hackberry, eastern redbud, black tupelo, black cherry and more," after receiving a grant from the USDA's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Stanford Run Once Again Flows Into Cuyahoga.

Cleveland.com (11/4, Krouse) reports, "Stanford Run has been reconnected to the Cuyahoga River after years of being cut off by sediment that had filled in the stream channel." The project "had been in the planning stages for several years and became a reality after money was made available through the federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative."

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Illinois

Governors Urge Regan To Take Action To Allow Year-Around E15 Sales.

WCMY-AM Ottawa, IL (11/4) reports, "A group of Midwestern Governors is asking the EPA to allow year-round E15 sales...in a letter to Administrator Michael Regan." The governors "urge Regan to use his authority under Section 211 of the Clean Air Act to promulgate regulations that put E10 and E15 on equal footing regarding volatility limitations, which would again allow year-round sales of E15."

KYOU-TV (11/4) also reports.

Forsyth Water Order Lifted, Oreana Still Has To Boil.

WAND-TV Champaign, IL (11/4) reports, “the Environmental Protection Agency had lifted the order for water customers of Forsyth.” The boil order had been in place since last Thursday. The Village of Oreana remains under orders to boil its drinking water.

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Michigan

Michigan City Continues To Grapple With Lead Water Crisis.

The **AP** (11/4, Phillis) reports that free “water distribution sites are a fixture of life” in Benton Harbor, Michigan – a “majority Black city...where almost half of the nearly 10,000 residents live below the poverty line.” For three years, “tests of its public water system revealed elevated levels of lead.” Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer (D) “has promised to spend millions of dollars to replace the city’s lead service lines within 18 months – a blistering pace for a process that often takes decades.” EPA Administrator Michael Regan said in a statement Tuesday, “The people of Benton Harbor have suffered for too long.” Residents are worried “what the elevated lead levels mean for their families’ health.” The problem “is also inconvenient and stressful. Drivers line up at water distribution sites early, pulling people away from jobs and family. Bottled water must be used carefully so it doesn’t run out.”

Newsweek (11/4, Brady) reports, “Fixing Benton Harbor’s systems would involve replacing about 2,400 pipes that could be transferring lead into drinking water...but the lack of resources provided to the city has resulted in little progress.” The EPA “toured the city’s water facility and found multiple problems that could be responsible for its lead-infested water.” As a result, “the EPA is considering forfeiting ownership of the facility, the Associated Press reported,” and has “urged immediate and extensive action.”

MLive (MI) (11/4, McWhirter) reports that Gov. Whitmer “signed an executive directive meant to strengthen Michigan’s water laws and policies amid the state’s latest drinking water crisis in Benton Harbor.” The governor’s directive “signed on Thursday is a six-part plan to force state regulators to do a line-by-line review of drinking water rules and suggest changes to strengthen public protections, as well as potentially overhaul how they do their jobs.” The article continues, “This comes against the backdrop of a state plagued with tens of thousands of residents left to cope with lead contamination in Flint, Benton Harbor, Hamtramck, plus thousands more dealing with PFAS pollution, stormwater runoff and other water issues.”

The **Detroit News** (11/4) reports, “Gov. Gretchen Whitmer issued a directive Thursday to address drinking water safety the same day her environmental department disclosed 11,000 documents related to the Benton Harbor lead crisis.” The directive “requires the Michigan departments of Health and Human Services and Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to review existing law to determine what reforms are necessary to strengthen drinking water protections.”

WKZO-AM Kalamazoo, MI (11/4, Malec) and **The Center Square** (11/4, McClallen) describe Gov. Whitmer’s directive in detail.

Michigan Advance (11/4, Heywood), **WUOM-FM** Ann Arbor, MI (11/4, Dwyer), **WGN-TV** (11/4), **WMAQ-TV** (11/4), and **WJBK-TV** (11/4) also report.

Opinion: Finding Solution In Benton Harbor Is In Whitmer's Best Interests. In an op-ed in the **Washington Post** (11/4), columnist Micheline Maynard says community advocates and environmentalists in Benton Harbor "accuse the state of taking far too long to act on a problem that was identified three years ago." The situation "too strongly echoes the neglect and official indifference that met the deadly water crisis in Flint, Mich., another city that is majority African American, only a few years ago." Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Lieutenant Gov. Garlin Gilchrist "have an opportunity to demonstrate competence if they can make" their 18-month replacement plan "work." If Whitmer "is smart, she'll try to speed up even that ambitious target. She's up for reelection next fall."

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Ohio

Republic Steel Receives EPA Violation Notice Due To Lead Pollution.

The **Alliance (OH) Review** (11/4, Byer) reports the EPA "has issued a violation notice to Republic Steel for excessive lead air pollution and for failing to perform required emissions testing, monitoring and record keeping." This comes after the facility was cited and fined repeatedly by the Ohio EPA "for various violations, including some related to airborne lead emissions that temporarily halted leaded steel production earlier this year."

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Wisconsin

Growth Energy Threatens To Sue If Biofuel Volumes Are Late.

WMSN-TV (11/4) reports on Ag Day, "The chronically slow rollout of the renewable volume obligations under the renewable fuel standard has biofuels groups threatening to take the EPA to court." The numbers are due by Nov. 30, but Growth Energy has warned that it "giving the EPA 60 days to issue the numbers before it says it will file suit."

Sheboygan County Lakeshore Still Exceeds EPA Ozone Standards.

The **Sheboygan (WI) Press** (11/4) reports, "At least part of Sheboygan County, home to more than half its population, has consistently seen higher ozone pollution levels than what the EPA deems acceptable," even though air quality is improving. The Sheboygan County "lakeshore's continued nonattainment designation is a problem for businesses, for residents and for people who might be looking to move here."

Cleanup Of Calumet Fire Completed.

The Houghton (MI) Daily Mining Gazette (11/4) reports cleanup of the site of the fire on the 100 block of Fifth Street of Calumet has been completed, EPA On-Scene Coordinator Brian Kelly "said in an email on Oct. 20." Debris has been removed and basements backfilled. Kelly said, "In consultation with the village, we decided to wait until spring to add topsoil," out of concerns about winter erosion.

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